

VZCZCXRO7506
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHOR #0545/01 1951550
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 141550Z JUL 09 ZDK FOR MIL ONLY
FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5888
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GABORONE 000545

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [BC](#)

SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY SURROUNDS APPOINTMENT OF NEW BTV HEAD,
EX-POLICE OFFICER

GABORONE 00000545 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: A/DCM Heather Merritt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Summary: On July 10, Molefhe Sejoie was announced as the new general manager of the state-owned Botswana Television (BTV). Sejoie is a retired police officer, and critics of the appointment say this is another example of President Khama's pattern of appointing military and police officials to head civilian institutions. Supporters within BTV say that appointing a good manager who can bring some additional discipline to BTV would be welcome as there is currently a lack of good oversight and supervision at the station. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology announced July 10 that Molefhe Sejoie had been appointed as the new head of the state-owned Botswana Television (BTV). Sejoie is a recently retired police officer, who served in the Botswana Police Service (BPS) since 1979. In 1983 Mr. Sejoie began his specialization within the telecommunications area of the BPS. Among other roles, Sejoie served as an IT manager and a Divisional Transport and Telecommunications Branch Officer. Sejoie retired from the police force last year. At the announcement of Sejoie's appointment, BTV officials pointed to his experience within the police force and also stated that Sejoie had been working on projects for BTV.

¶3. (U) The General Manager heads BTV and reports to the Director of Communications, who oversees BTV as well as government owned radio stations. Critics of the appointment say that Sejoie lacks the requisite experience needed for the position, stating that his work within the police force was simply managerial and did not give him the technical experience for day-to-day operations of Botswana's only local television station. Additionally, they see to this appointment as another example of a pattern of President Khama allegedly trying to "militarize" civilian jobs. Critics point to other Khama appointments of former military/police into government positions, including the Commissioner of Prisons and Rehabilitation, the Private Secretary to the President, the Senior Private Secretary to the President, the General Manager of the Central Transport Organization, as well as the majority of officers who make up the newly formed Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services (DISS). Some media commentators have asked why the acting general manager, who worked his way up through the ranks at BTV, was not offered the position.

¶4. (SBU) Supporters of Sejoie's appointment state that BTV has needed additional structure and discipline for some time. They state that personal connections were by far the most important barometer for success. They describe the management situation at BTV as "a crisis." However, these statements about BTV management were made in the press by

unnamed sources. Embassy staff who work closely with the media had not heard these criticisms of BTV previously.

15. (C) Comment: Post thinks that it is unlikely that ex-police officer Sejoie's appointment as BTV manager will continue to be a major issue in the press. However, it will be used by critics of President Khama (both opposition supporters and some within the ruling BDP) as another in a string of examples of the President appointing retired military and police officers into prominent civilian positions. While it is true that Khama has appointed former security officers to several civilian positions, this is not necessarily an alarming trend. Considering that the President rose up through BDF ranks, he may simply be more comfortable working with people he knows and trusts, many of whom are ex-military. However, post has also been hearing reports that many in the government see President Khama as someone to be feared, and that it is this fear and not simply respect that he is accorded when determining policies. Additionally, there have been reports that some of the individuals that Khama has appointed do not serve in a traditional role as advisors or counselors to the President, but rather simply do what they are told by the President. It is hard to get a read on how true this is, although public actions by the President do tend to show that he does not tolerate dissent well.

16. (C) Comment Continued: It is important to remember that government actions with regard to public information and the media are especially sensitive at present, as Botswana prepares for its general election in October 2009. Embassy officers have heard allegations that the appointment of ex-policeman Sejoie to lead Botswana's only television station just before the election campaign casts doubt on the credibility of the government owned media to report on the

GABORONE 00000545 002.2 OF 002

election in an impartial way. However, it is hard to find impartial reporting in Botswana, whether by the government owned television, radio, and newspapers or by privately owned (and often fiercely critical of government) radio and newspapers. In fact post has been seeing a growing sensationalism of stories and witnessed many stories which were simply factually incorrect. Post will continue to monitor both private and government-controlled media and report any perceived biases or manipulation of information as appropriate as Botswana's election nears. End Comment.
NOLAN